No. 3. *(Price One Shilling.)* MARCH, 1850.

With an Etching by F. Madox Brown.

Art and Poetry:

Being Thoughts towards Nature

Conducted principally by Artists.

When whoso merely hath a little thought
Will plainly think the thought which is in him,—
Not imaging another's bright or dim,
Not mangling with new words what others taught;
When whoso speaks, from having either sought
Or only found,—will speak, not just to skim
A shallow surface with words made and trim,
But in that very speech the matter brought:
Be not too keen to cry—"So this is all!—
A thing I might myself have thought as well,
But would not say it, for it was not worth!"
Ask: "Is this truth?" For is it still to tell
That, be the theme a point or the whole earth,
Truth is a circle, perfect, great or small?

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The Subscribers to this Work are respectfully informed that the future Numbers will appear on the last day of the Month for which they are dated. Also, that a supplementary, or large-sized Etching will occasionally be given (as with the present Number.)

GONERIL: REGAN: LEAR: ROOM: CORDELIA: FRANCE:

Cordelia.

"The jewels of our father, with washed eyes
Cordelia leaves you. I know you what you are
And, like a sister, am most loth to tell
Your faults, as they are named. Use well our father:
To your professed bosoms I commit him.
But yet, alas !—stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place.
So farewell to you both."

CORDELIA, unabashed and strong,
Her voice's quite scarcely less
Than yester-eve, enduring wrong
And curses of her father's tongue,
Departs, a righteous-souled princess;
Bidding her sisters cherish him.

They turn on her and fix their eyes,
But cease not passing inward;—one
Sneering with lips still curled to lies,
Sinuous of body, serpent-wise;
Her footfall creeps, and her looks shun
The very thing on which they dwell.

The other, proud, with heavy cheeks
And massive forehead, where remains
A mark of frowning. If she seeks
With smiles to tame her eyes, or speaks,
Her mouth grows wanton: she disdains
The ground with haughty, measured steps.

The silent years had grown between
Father and daughter. Always she
Had waited on his will, and been
Foremost in doing it,—unseen
Often: she wished him not to see,
But served him for his sake alone.

He saw her constant love; and, tho'
Occasion surely was not scant,
Perhaps had never sought to know
How she could give it wording. So
His love, not stumbling at a want,
Among the three preferred her first.

Her's is the soul not stubborn, yet
  Asserting self. The heart was rich;
But, questioned, she had rather let
Men judge her conscious of a debt
  Than freely giving: thus, her speech
Is love according to her bond.

In France the queen Cordelia had
  Her hours well satisfied with love:
She loved her king, too, and was glad:
And yet, at times, a something sad,
  May be, was with her, thinking of
The manner of his life at home.

But this does not usurp her mind.
  It is but sorrow guessed from far
Thro' twilight dimly. She must find
Her duty elsewhere: not resigned—
  Because she knows them what they are,
Yet scarcely ruffled from her peace.

Cordelia—a name well revered;
  Synonymous with truth and tried
Affection; which but needs be heard
To raise one selfsame thought endeared
  To men and women far and wide;
A name our mothers taught to us.

Like placid faces which you knew
  Years since, but not again shall meet;
On a sick bed like wind that blew;
An excellent thing, best likened to
  Her own voice, gentle, soft, and sweet;
Shakspere's Cordelia;—better thus.

Macbeth.*

The purpose of the following Essay is to demonstrate the existence of a very important error in the hitherto universally adopted interpretation of the character of Macbeth. We shall prove that *a design of illegitimately obtaining the crown of Scotland had been conceived by Macbeth, and that it had been communicated by him to his wife, prior to his first meeting with the witches, who are commonly supposed to have suggested that design.*

Most persons when they commence the study of the great Shaksperian dramas, already entertain concerning them a set of traditional notions, generally originated by the representations, or misrepresentations, of the theatre, afterwards to become strengthened or confirmed by desultory reading and corroborative criticism. With this class of persons it was our misfortune to rank, when we first entered upon the *study* of "Macbeth," fully believing that, in the character of the hero, Shakspere intended to represent a man whose general rectitude of soul is drawn on to ruin by the temptations of supernatural agents; temptations which have the effect of eliciting his latent ambition, and of misdirecting that ambition when it has been thus elicited.

As long as we continued under this idea, the impression produced upon us by "Macbeth" came far short of that sense of complete satisfaction which we were accustomed to receive from every other of the higher works of Shakspere. But, upon deeper study, the view now proposed suggested itself, and seemed to render every thing as it should be. We say that this view suggested *itself*, because it did not arise directly from any one of the numerous passages which can be quoted in its support; it originated in a general feeling of what seemed to be wanting to the completion of the entire effect; a circumstance which has been stated at length from the persuasion that it is of itself no mean presumption in favour of the opinion which it is the aim of this paper to establish.

Let us proceed to examine the validity of a position, which,

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* It is proper to state that this article was written, and seen, exactly as it at present stands, by several literary friends of the writer, a considerable time before the appearance, in the "Westminster Review," of a Paper advocating a view of "Macbeth," similar to that which is here taken. But although the publication of the particular view was thus anticipated, nearly all the most forcible arguments for maintaining it were omitted; and the subject, mixed up, as it was, with lengthy disquisitions upon very minor topics of Shaksperian acting, &c. made no very general impression at the time.

if it deserves any attention at all, may certainly claim an investigation more than usually minute. We shall commence by giving an analysis of the first Act, wherein will be considered, successively, every passage which may appear to bear either way upon the point in question.

The inferences which we believe to be deducible from the first scene can be profitably employed only in conjunction with those to be discovered in the third. Our analysis must, therefore, be entered upon by an attempt to ascertain the true character of the impressions which it was the desire of Shakspere to convey by the second.

This scene is almost exclusively occupied with the narrations of the "bleeding Soldier," and of *Rosse*. These narrations are constructed with the express purpose of vividly setting forth the personal valour of Duncan's generals, "Macbeth and Banquo." Let us consider what is the *maximum* worth which the words of Shakspere will, at this period of the play, allow us to attribute to the moral character of the hero:—a point, let it be observed, of first-rate importance to the present argument. We find Macbeth, in this scene, designated by various epithets, *all* of which, either directly or indirectly, arise from feelings of admiration created by his courageous conduct in the war in which he is supposed to have been engaged. "Brave" and "Noble Macbeth," "Bellona's Bridegroom," "Valiant Cousin," and "Worthy Gentleman," are the general titles by which he is here spoken of; but none of them afford any positive clue whatever to his *moral* character. Nor is any such clue supplied by the scenes in which he is presently received by the messengers of Duncan, and afterwards received and lauded by Duncan himself. Macbeth's moral character, up to the development of his criminal hopes, remains strictly *negative*. Hence it is difficult to fathom the meaning of those critics, (A. Schlegel at their head), who have over and over again made the ruin of Macbeth's "so many noble qualities"* the subject of their comment.

In the third scene we have the meeting of the witches, the announcement of whose intention to re-assemble upon the heath, *there to meet with Macbeth*, forms the certainly most obvious, though not perhaps, altogether the most important, aim of the short scene by which the tragedy is opened. An enquiry of much interest here suggests itself. Did Shakspere intend that in his tragedy of "Macbeth" the witches should figure as originators of gratuitous destruction, in direct opposition to the traditional, and

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* A. Schlegel's "Lectures on Dramatic Literature." Vol. II. p. 208.

even proverbial, character of the *genus?* By that character such personages have been denied the possession of any influence whatever over the untainted soul. Has Shakspere in this instance retained, or has he abolished, the chief of those characteristics which have been universally attributed to the beings in question?

We think that he has retained it, and for the following reasons: Whenever Shakspere has elsewhere embodied superstitions, he has treated them as direct and unalterable *facts* of human nature; and this he has done because he was too profound a philosopher to be capable of regarding genuine superstition as the product of random spectra of the fancy, having absolute darkness for the prime condition of their being, instead of seeing in it rather the zodiacal light of truth, the concomitant of the uprising, and of the setting of the truth, and a partaker in its essence. Again, Shakspere has in this very play devoted a considerable space to the purpose of suggesting the self-same trait of character now under discussion, and this he appears to have done with the express intent of guarding against a mistake, the probability of the occurrence of which he foresaw, but which, for reasons connected with the construction of the play, he could not hope otherwise to obviate.

We allude to the introductory portion of the present scene. One sister, we learn, has just returned from killing *swine;* another breathes forth vengeance against a sailor, on account of the uncharitable act of his wife; but "his bark *cannot be lost,*" though it may be "tempest tossed." The last words are scarcely uttered before the confabulation is interrupted by the approach of Macbeth, to whom they have as yet made no direct allusion whatever, throughout the whole of this opening passage, consisting in all of some five and twenty lines. Now this were a digression which would be a complete anomaly, having place, as it is supposed to have, at this early stage of one of the most consummate of the tragedies of Shakspere. We may be sure, therefore, that it is the chief object of these lines to impress the reader beforehand with an idea that, in the mind of Macbeth, there already exist sure foundations for that great superstructure of evil, to the erection of which, the "metaphysical *aid*" of the weird sisters is now to be offered. An opinion which is further supported by the reproaches of Hecate, who, afterwards, referring to what occurs in this scene, exclaims,

> "All you have done
> Hath been but for a wayward son,
> Spiteful, and wrathful, who, as others do,
> Loves for his own end, not for you."

Words which seem to relate to ends loved of Macbeth before the witches had spurred him on to their acquirement.

The fact that in the old chronicle, from which the plot of the play is taken, the machinations of the witches are not assumed to be *un*-gratuitous, cannot be employed as an argument against our position. In history the sisters figure in the capacity of prophets *merely*. There we have no previous announcement of their intention "to meet with Macbeth." But in Shakspere they are invested with all other of their superstitional attributes, in order that they may become the evil instruments of holy vengeance upon evil; of that most terrible of vengeance which punishes sin, after it has exceeded certain bounds, by deepening it.

Proceeding now with our analysis, upon the entrance of Macbeth and Banquo, the witches wind up their hurried charm. They are first perceived by Banquo. To his questions the sisters refuse to reply; but, at the command of Macbeth, they immediately speak, and forthwith utter the prophecy which seals the fate of Duncan.

Now, assuming the truth of our view, what would be the natural behaviour of Macbeth upon coming into sudden contact with beings who appear to hold intelligence of his most secret thoughts; and upon hearing those thoughts, as it were, spoken aloud in the presence of a third party? His behaviour would be precisely that which is implied by the question of Banquo.

> "Good sir, why do you *start and seem to fear*
> Things which do sound so fair?"

If, on the other hand, our view is *not* true, why, seeing that their characters are in the abstract so much alike, why does the present conduct of Macbeth differ from that of Banquo, when the witches direct their prophecies to him? Why has Shakspere altered the narrative of Holinshed, without the prospect of gaining any advantage commensurate to the licence taken in making that alteration? These are the words of the old chronicle: "This (the rencontre with the witches) was reputed at the first but some vain fantastical illusion by Macbeth and Banquo, insomuch that Banquo would call Macbeth in jest king of Scotland; and Macbeth again would call him in jest likewise the father of many kings." Now it was the invariable practice of Shakspere to give facts or traditions just as he found them, whenever the introduction of those facts or traditions was not totally irreconcileable with the tone of his conception. How then (should we still receive the notion which we are now combating) are we to account for his anomalous practice in this particular case?

When the witches are about to vanish, Macbeth attempts to delay their departure, exclaiming,

"Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:
By Sinel's death, I know I am thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? the thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; *and, to be king*
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say, from whence
You owe this strange *intelligence?*"

"To be king stands not within the prospect of belief, *no more than to be Cawdor.*" No! it naturally stands much *less* within the prospect of belief. Here the mind of Macbeth, having long been accustomed to the nurture of its "royal hope," conceives that it is uttering a very suitable hyperbole of comparison. Had that mind been hitherto an honest mind the word "Cawdor" would have occupied the place of "king," "king" that of "Cawdor." Observe too the general character of this speech: Although the coincidence of the principal prophecy with his own thoughts has so strong an effect upon Macbeth as to induce him to, at once, pronounce the words of the sisters, "intelligence;" he nevertheless affects to treat that prophecy as completely secondary to the other in the strength of its claims upon his consideration. This is a piece of *over-cautious* hypocrisy which is fully in keeping with the tenor of his conduct throughout the rest of the tragedy.

No sooner have the witches vanished than Banquo begins to doubt whether there had been "such things there as they did speak about." This is the natural incredulity of a free mind so circumstanced. On the other hand, Macbeth, whose manner, since the first announcement of the sisters, has been that of a man in a *reverie*, makes no doubt whatever of the reality of their appearance, nor does he reply to the expressed scepticism of Banquo, but abruptly exclaims, "your children shall be kings." To this Banquo answers, "you shall be king." "And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?" continues Macbeth. Now, what, in either case, is the condition of mind which can have given rise to this part of the dialogue? It is, we imagine, sufficiently evident that the playful words of Banquo were suggested to Shakspere by the narration of Holinshed; but how are we to account for those of Macbeth, otherwise than by supposing that the question of the crown is now settled in his mind by the coincidence of the principal prediction, with the shapings of his own thoughts, and that he is at this moment occupied with the *wholly unanticipated* revelations, touching the thaneship of Cawdor, and the future possession of the throne by the offspring of Banquo?

Now comes the fulfilment of the first prophecy. Mark the words of these men, upon receiving the announcement of Rosse:

"*Banquo.* What! can the devil speak truth?

Macbeth. The thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me
In borrowed robes?"

Mark how that reception is in either case precisely the reverse of that given to the prophecy itself. Here *Banquo* starts. But what is here done for Banquo, by the coincidence of the prophecy with the truth, has been already done for Macbeth, by the coincidence of his thought with the prophecy. Accordingly, Macbeth is calm enough to play the hypocrite, when he must otherwise have experienced surprise far greater than that of Banquo, because he is much more nearly concerned in the source of it. So far indeed from being overcome with astonishment, Macbeth still continues to dwell upon the prophecy, by which his peace of mind is afterwards constantly disturbed,

"Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?"

Banquo's reply to this question has been one of the chief sources of the interpretation, the error of which we are now endeavouring to expose. He says,

"That, trusted home,
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But, 'tis strange;
And often times, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray us
In deepest consequence."

Now, these words have usually been considered to afford the clue to the *entire* nature and extent of the supernatural influence brought into play upon the present tragedy; whereas, in truth, all that they express is a natural suspicion, called up in the mind of Banquo, by Macbeth's remarkable deportment, that *such* is the character of the influence which is at this moment being exerted upon the soul of the man to whom he therefore thinks proper to hint the warning they contain.

The soliloquy which immediately follows the above passage is particularly worthy of comment:

"This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good:—if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,

Commencing in a truth ? I am thane of Cawdor :
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion,
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs
Against the use of nature ? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man, that function
Is smothered in surmise, and nothing is,
But what is not."

The early portion of this passage assuredly indicates that Macbeth regards the communications of the witches merely in the light of an invitation to the carrying out of a design pre-existent in his own mind. He thinks that the *spontaneous* fulfilment of the chief prophecy is in no way probable ; the consummation of the lesser prophecy being held by him, but as an "earnest of success" to his own efforts in consummating the greater. From the latter portion of this soliloquy we learn the real extent to which "metaphysical aid" is implicated in bringing about the crime of Duncan's murder. It serves to assure Macbeth that *that* is the "nearest way" to the attainment of his wishes ;—a way to the suggestion of which he now, for the first time, "*yields*," because the chances of its failure have been infinitely lessened by the "earnest of success" which he has just received.

After the above soliloquy Macbeth breaks the long pause, implied in Banquo's words, "Look how our partner's rapt," by exclaiming,

"If chance will have me king, why chance may crown me,
Without my stir."

Which is a very logical conclusion; but one at which he would long ago have arrived, had "soliciting" meant "suggestion," as most people suppose it to have done ; or at least, under those circumstances, he would have been satisfied with that conclusion, instead of immediately afterwards changing it, as we see that he has done, when he adds,

"Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day !"

With that the third scene closes ; the parties engaged in it proceeding forthwith to the palace of Duncan at Fores.

Towards the conclusion of the fourth scene, Duncan names his successor in the realm of Scotland. After this Macbeth hastily departs, to inform his wife of the king's proposed visit to their castle, at Inverness. The last words of Macbeth are the following,

"The prince of Cumberland!—That is a step,
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap.
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires!
Let not light see my black and deep desires;
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be,
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see."

These lines are equally remarkable for a tone of settled assurance as to the fulfilment of the speaker's royal hope, and for an entire absence of any expression of reliance upon the power of the witches, —the hitherto supposed originators of that hope,—in aiding its consummation. It is particularly noticeable that Macbeth should make no reference whatever, not even in thought, (that is, in soliloquy) to any supernatural agency during the long period intervening between the fulfilment of the two prophecies. Is it probable that this would have been the case had Shakspere intended that such an agency should be understood to have been the first motive and mainspring of that deed, which, with all its accompanying struggles of conscience, he has so minutely pictured to us as having been, during that period, enacted? But besides this negative argument, we have a positive one for his non-reliance upon their promises in the fact that he attempts to outwit them by the murder of Fleance even after the fulfilment of the second prophecy.

The fifth scene opens with Lady Macbeth's perusal of her husband's narration of his interview with the witches. The order of our investigation requires the postponement of comment upon the contents of this letter. We leave it for the present, merely cautioning the reader against taking up any hasty objections to a very important clause in the enunciation of our view by reminding him that, contrary to Shakspere's custom in ordinary cases, we are made acquainted only with a *portion* of the missive in question. Let us then proceed to consider the soliloquy which immediately follows the perusal of this letter:

"I do fear thy nature.
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness,
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition; but without
The illness should attend it. That thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false
And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries this thou must do if thou have it,
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Thou wishest should be undone."

It is vividly apparent that this passage indicates a knowledge of the character it depicts, which is far too intimate to allow of its being other than a *direct* inference from facts connected with previous communications upon similar topics between the speaker and the writer: unless, indeed, we assume that in this instance Shakspere has notably departed from his usual principles of characterization, in having invested Lady Macbeth with an amount of philosophical acuteness, and a faculty of deduction, much beyond those pretended to by any other of the female creations of the same author.

The above passage is interrupted by the announcement of the approach of Duncan. Observe Lady Macbeth's behaviour upon receiving it. She immediately determines upon what is to be done, and all without (are we to suppose?) in any way consulting, or being aware of, the wishes or inclinations of her husband! Observe too, that neither does *she* appear to regard the witches' prophecies as anything more than an invitation, and holding forth of "metaphysical *aid*" to the carrying out of an independent project. That this should be the case in both instances vastly strengthens the argument legitimately deducible from each.

At the conclusion of the passage which called for the last remark, Macbeth, after a long and eventful period of absence, let it be recollected, enters to a wife who, we will for a moment suppose, is completely ignorant of the character of her husband's recent cogitations. These are the first words which pass between them,

"*Macbeth.* My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.
L. Macbeth. And when goes hence?
Macbeth. To-morrow, as he purposes.
L. Macbeth. Oh! never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters:—to beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under it. He that's coming
Must be provided for; and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch,
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.
Macbeth. We will speak further."

Are these words those which would naturally arise from the situation at present, by common consent, attributed to the speakers

of them? That is to say a situation in which *each speaker is totally ignorant of the sentiments pre-existent in the mind of the other.* Are the words, "we will speak further," those which might in nature form the whole and sole reply made by a man to his wife's completely unexpected anticipation of his own fearful purposes? If not, if few or none of these lines, thus interpreted, will satisfy the reader's feeling for common truth, does not the view which we have adopted invest them with new light, and improved, or perfected meaning?

The next scene represents the arrival of Duncan at Inverness, and contains nothing which bears either way upon the point in question. Proceeding, therefore, to the seventh and last scene of the first act we come to what we cannot but consider to be proof positive of the opinion under examination. We shall transcribe at length the portion of this scene containing that proof; having first reminded the reader that a few hours at most can have elapsed between the arrival of Macbeth, and the period at which the words, now to be quoted, are uttered.

"*Lady Macbeth.* *Was the hope drunk,*
Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since,
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time,
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour,
As thou art in desire? Would'st thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting, I dare not, wait upon, I would,
Like the poor cat in the adage?

Macbeth. Prithee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.
Lady Macbeth. *What beast was't then*
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man,
And to be more than what you were you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both.
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:

I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from its boneless gums,
And dashed the brains out, *had I so sworn*
As you have done to this."

With respect to the above lines, let us observe that, the words, "nor time nor place did then adhere," render it evident that they hold reference to something which passed before Duncan had signified his intention of visiting the castle of Macbeth. Consequently the words of Lady Macbeth can have no reference to the previous communication of any definite intention, on the part of her husband, to murder the king; because, not long before, she professes herself aware that Macbeth's nature is "too full of the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way;" indeed, she has every reason to suppose that she herself has been the means of breaking that enterprise to *him*, though, in truth, the crime had already, as we have seen, suggested itself to his thought, "whose murder was as yet fantastical."

Again the whole tenor of this passage shews that it refers to verbal communication between them. *But no such communication can have taken place since Macbeth's rencontre with the witches*; for, besides that he is, immediately after that rencontre, conducted to the presence of the king, who there signifies an intention of proceeding directly to Macbeth's castle, such a communication would have rendered the contents of the letter to Lady Macbeth completely superfluous. What then are we to conclude concerning these problematical lines? First begging the reader to bear in mind the tone of sophistry which has been observed by Schlegel to pervade, and which is indeed manifest throughout the persuasions of Lady Macbeth, we answer, that she wilfully confounds her husband's,—probably vague and unplanned—"enterprise" of obtaining the crown, with that "nearest way" to which she now urges him; but, at the same time, she obscurely individualizes the separate purposes in the words, "and to be *more* than what you were, you would be so much more the man."

It is a fact which is highly interesting in itself, and one which strongly impeaches the candour of the majority of Shakspere's commentators, that the impenetrable obscurity which must have pervaded the whole of this passage should never have been made the subject of remark. As far as we can remember, not a word has been said upon the matter in any one of the many superfluously explanatory editions of our dramatist's productions. Censures have been repeatedly lavished upon minor cases of obscurity, none upon this. In the former case the fault has been felt to be Shakspere's,

for it has usually existed in the expression; but in the latter the language is unexceptional, and the avowal of obscurity might imply the possibility of misapprehension or stupidity upon the part of the avower.

Probably the only considerable obstacle likely to act against the general adoption of those views will be the doubt, whether so important a feature of this consummate tragedy can have been left by Shakspere so obscurely expressed as to be capable of remaining totally unperceived during upwards of two centuries, within which period the genius of a Coleridge and of a Schlegel has been applied to its interpretation. Should this objection be brought forward, we reply, in the first place, that the objector is 'begging' his question in assuming that the feature under examination has remained *totally* unperceived. Coleridge by way of comment upon these words of Banquo,

> "Good sir, why do you stand, and seem to fear
> Things that do sound so fair?"

writes thus: "The general idea is all that can be required of a poet—not a scholastic logical consistency in all the parts, so as to meet metaphysical objectors. * * * * * * * * How strictly true to nature it is, that Banquo, and not Macbeth himself, directs our notice to the effects produced in Macbeth's mind, *rendered temptible by previous dalliance with ambitious thoughts.*" Here Coleridge denies the *necessity* of "logical consistency, so as to meet metaphysical objectors," although he has, throughout his criticisms upon Shakspere, endeavored, and nearly always with success, to prove the *existence* of that consistency; and so strongly has he felt the want of it here, that he has, in order to satisfy himself, *assumed* that "previous dalliance with ambitious thoughts," whose existence it has been our object to *prove.*

But, putting Coleridge's imperfect perception of the truth out of the question, surely nothing can be easier than to believe *that* for the belief in which we have so many precedents. How many beauties, lost upon Dryden, were perceived by Johnson; How many, hidden to Johnson and his cotemporaries, have been brought to light by Schlegel and by Coleridge.

Repining.

She sat alway thro' the long day
Spinning the weary thread away;
And ever said in undertone:
"Come, that I be no more alone."

From early dawn to set of sun
Working, her task was still undone;
And the long thread seemed to increase
Even while she spun and did not cease.
She heard the gentle turtle-dove
Tell to its mate a tale of love;
She saw the glancing swallows fly,
Ever a social company;
She knew each bird upon its nest
Had cheering songs to bring it rest;
None lived alone save only she;—
The wheel went round more wearily;
She wept and said in undertone:
"Come, that I be no more alone."

Day followed day, and still she sighed
For love, and was not satisfied;
Until one night, when the moonlight
Turned all the trees to silver white,
She heard, what ne'er she heard before,
A steady hand undo the door.
The nightingale since set of sun
Her throbbing music had not done,
And she had listened silently;
But now the wind had changed, and she
Heard the sweet song no more, but heard
Beside her bed a whispered word:
"Damsel, rise up; be not afraid;
For I am come at last," it said.

She trembled, tho' the voice was mild;
She trembled like a frightened child;—
Till she looked up, and then she saw
The unknown speaker without awe.
He seemed a fair young man, his eyes
Beaming with serious charities;

His cheek was white, but hardly pale;
And a dim glory like a veil
Hovered about his head, and shone
Thro' the whole room till night was gone.

So her fear fled; and then she said,
Leaning upon her quiet bed:
"Now thou art come, I prithee stay,
That I may see thee in the day,
And learn to know thy voice, and hear
It evermore calling me near."

He answered: "Rise, and follow me."
But she looked upwards wonderingly:
"And whither would'st thou go, friend? stay
Until the dawning of the day."
But he said: "The wind ceaseth, Maid;
Of chill nor damp be thou afraid."

She bound her hair up from the floor,
And passed in silence from the door.

So they went forth together, he
Helping her forward tenderly.
The hedges bowed beneath his hand;
Forth from the streams came the dry land
As they passed over; evermore
The pallid moonbeams shone before;
And the wind hushed, and nothing stirred;
Not even a solitary bird,
Scared by their footsteps, fluttered by
Where aspen-trees stood steadily.

As they went on, at length a sound
Came trembling on the air around;
The undistinguishable hum
Of life, voices that go and come
Of busy men, and the child's sweet
High laugh, and noise of trampling feet.

Then he said: "Wilt thou go and see?"
And she made answer joyfully;
"The noise of life, of human life,
Of dear communion without strife,
Of converse held 'twixt friend and friend;
Is it not here our path shall end?"
He led her on a little way
Until they reached a hillock: "Stay."

It was a village in a plain.
High mountains screened it from the rain
And stormy wind; and nigh at hand
A bubbling streamlet flowed, o'er sand
Pebbly and fine, and sent life up
Green succous stalk and flower-cup.

Gradually, day's harbinger,
A chilly wind began to stir.
It seemed a gentle powerless breeze
That scarcely rustled thro' the trees;
And yet it touched the mountain's head
And the paths man might never tread.
But hearken: in the quiet weather
Do all the streams flow down together?—
No, 'tis a sound more terrible
Than tho' a thousand rivers fell.
The everlasting ice and snow
Were loosened then, but not to flow;—
With a loud crash like solid thunder
The avalanche came, burying under
The village; turning life and breath
And rest and joy and plans to death.

"Oh! let us fly, for pity fly;
Let us go hence, friend, thou and I.
There must be many regions yet
Where these things make not desolate."
He looked upon her seriously;
Then said: "Arise and follow me."
The path that lay before them was
Nigh covered over with long grass;
And many slimy things and slow
Trailed on between the roots below.
The moon looked dimmer than before;
And shadowy cloudlets floating o'er
Its face sometimes quite hid its light,
And filled the skies with deeper night.

At last, as they went on, the noise
Was heard of the sea's mighty voice;
And soon the ocean could be seen
In its long restlessness serene.

Upon its breast a vessel rode
That drowsily appeared to nod
As the great billows rose and fell,
And swelled to sink, and sank to swell.

Meanwhile the strong wind had come forth
From the chill regions of the North,
The mighty wind invisible.
And the low waves began to swell;
And the sky darkened overhead;
And the moon once looked forth, then fled
Behind dark clouds; while here and there
The lightning shone out in the air;
And the approaching thunder rolled
With angry pealings manifold.
How many vows were made, and prayers
That in safe times were cold and scarce.
Still all availed not; and at length
The waves arose in all their strength,
And fought against the ship, and filled
The ship. Then were the clouds unsealed,
And the rain hurried forth, and beat
On every side and over it.

Some clung together, and some kept
A long stern silence, and some wept.
Many half-crazed looked on in wonder
As the strong timbers rent asunder;
Friends forgot friends, foes fled to foes;—
And still the water rose and rose.

"Ah woe is me! Whom I have seen
Are now as tho' they had not been.
In the earth there is room for birth,
And there are graves enough in earth;
Why should the cold sea, tempest-torn,
Bury those whom it hath not borne?"

He answered not, and they went on.
The glory of the heavens was gone;
The moon gleamed not nor any star;
Cold winds were rustling near and far,
And from the trees the dry leaves fell
With a sad sound unspeakable.

The air was cold; till from the South
A gust blew hot, like sudden drouth,
Into their faces; and a light
Glowing and red, shone thro' the night.

A mighty city full of flame
And death and sounds without a name.
Amid the black and blinding smoke,
The people, as one man, awoke.
Oh! happy they who yesterday
On the long journey went away;
Whose pallid lips, smiling and chill,
While the flames scorch them smile on still;
Who murmur not; who tremble not
When the bier crackles fiery hot;
Who, dying, said in love's increase:
"Lord, let thy servant part in peace."

Those in the town could see and hear
A shaded river flowing near;
The broad deep bed could hardly hold
Its plenteous waters calm and cold.
Was flame-wrapped all the city wall,
The city gates were flame-wrapped all.

What was man's strength, what puissance then?
Women were mighty as strong men.
Some knelt in prayer, believing still,
Resigned unto a righteous will,
Bowing beneath the chastening rod,
Lost to the world, but found of God.
Some prayed for friend, for child, for wife;
Some prayed for faith; some prayed for life;
While some, proud even in death, hope gone,
Steadfast and still, stood looking on.

"Death—death—oh! let us fly from death;
Where'er we go it followeth;
All these are dead; and we alone
Remain to weep for what is gone.
What is this thing? thus hurriedly
To pass into eternity;
To leave the earth so full of mirth;
To lose the profit of our birth;
To die and be no more; to cease,
Having numbness that is not peace.

Let us go hence; and, even if thus
Death everywhere must go with us,
Let us not see the change, but see
Those who have been or still shall be."

He sighed and they went on together;
Beneath their feet did the grass wither;
Across the heaven high overhead
Dark misty clouds floated and fled;
And in their bosom was the thunder,
And angry lightnings flashed out under,
Forked and red and menacing;
Far off the wind was muttering;
It seemed to tell, not understood,
Strange secrets to the listening wood.

Upon its wings it bore the scent
Of blood of a great armament:
Then saw they how on either side
Fields were down-trodden far and wide.
That morning at the break of day
Two nations had gone forth to slay.

As a man soweth so he reaps.
The field was full of bleeding heaps;
Ghastly corpses of men and horses
That met death at a thousand sources;
Cold limbs and putrifying flesh;
Long love-locks clotted to a mesh
That stifled; stiffened mouths beneath
Staring eyes that had looked on death.

But these were dead: these felt no more
The anguish of the wounds they bore.
Behold, they shall not sigh again,
Nor justly fear, nor hope in vain.
What if none wept above them?—is
The sleeper less at rest for this?
Is not the young child's slumber sweet
When no man watcheth over it?
These had deep calm; but all around
There was a deadly smothered sound,
The choking cry of agony
From wounded men who could not die;

Who watched the black wing of the raven
Rise like a cloud 'twixt them and heaven,
And in the distance flying fast
Beheld the eagle come at last.

She knelt down in her agony :
" O Lord, it is enough," said she :
" My heart's prayer putteth me to shame ;
" Let me return to whence I came.
" Thou who for love's sake didst reprove,
" Forgive me for the sake of love."

Sweet Death.

The sweetest blossoms die.
And so it was that, going day by day
Unto the church to praise and pray,
And crossing the green church-yard thoughtfully,
I saw how on the graves the flowers
Shed their fresh leaves in showers ;
And how their perfume rose up to the sky
Before it passed away.

The youngest blossoms die.
They die, and fall, and nourish the rich earth
From which they lately had their birth.
Sweet life : but sweeter death that passeth by,
And is as tho' it had not been.
All colors turn to green :
The bright hues vanish, and the odours fly ;
The grass hath lasting worth.

And youth and beauty die.
So be it, O my God, thou God of truth.
Better than beauty and than youth
Are saints and angels, a glad company :
And Thou, O Lord, our Rest and Ease,
Are better far than these.
Why should we shrink from our full harvest ? why
Prefer to glean with Ruth ?

The Subject in Art.

No. II.

Resuming a consideration of the subject-matter suitable in painting and sculpture, it is necessary to repeat those premises, and to re-establish those principles which were advanced or elicited in the first number of this essay.

It was premised then that works of Fine Art affect the beholder in the same ratio as the *natural prototypes* of those works would affect him; and not in proportion to the difficulties overcome in the artificial representation of those prototypes. Not contending, meanwhile, that the picture painted by the hand of the artist, and then by the hand of nature on the eye of the beholder, is, in amount, the same as the picture painted there by nature alone; but disregarding, as irrelevant to this investigation, *all concomitants of fine art wherein they involve an ulterior impression as to the relative merits of the work by the amount of its success*, and, for a like reason, disregarding all emotions and impressions which are not the immediate and proximate result of an excitor influence of, or pertaining to, the *things artificial*, as a bona fide equivalent of the *things natural*.

Or the premises may be practically stated thus:—(1st.) When one looks on a certain painting or sculpture for the first time, the first notion is that of a painting or sculpture. (2nd.) In the next place, while the objects depicted are revealing themselves as real objects, the notion of a painting or sculpture has elapsed, and, in its place, there are emotions, passions, actions (moral or intellectual) according in sort and degree to the heart or mind-moving influence of the objects represented. (3rd.) Finally, there is a notion of a painting or sculpture, and a judgment or sentiment commensurate with the estimated merits of the work.—The second statement gives the premised conditions under which Fine Art is about to be treated: the 3rd statement exemplifies a phase in the being of Fine Art under which it is never to be considered: and furthermore, whilst the mental reflection last mentioned (the judgment on the work) is being made, it may occur that certain objects, most difficult of artistic execution, had been most successfully handled: the merits of introducing such objects, in such a manner, are the merits of those concomitants mentioned as equally without the scope of consideration.

Thus much for the premises—next to the re-establishment of principles.

1st. The principle was elicited, that Fine Art should regard the general happiness of man, by addressing those of his attributes which are *peculiarly human*, by exciting the activity of his rational and benevolent powers; and thereafter :—2nd, that the Subject in Art should be drawn from objects which so address and excite him; and 3rd, as objects so exciting the mental activity may (in proportion to the mental capacity) excite it to any amount, and so possibly in the highest degree (the function of Fine Art being *mental excitement*, and that of High Art being the *highest mental excitement*) that all objects so exciting mental activity and emotion in the highest degree, may afford subjects for High Art.

Having thus re-stated the premises and principles already deduced, let us proceed to enquire into the propriety of selecting the Subject from the past or the present time; which enquiry resolves itself fundamentally into the analysis of objects and incidents experienced immediately by the senses, or acquired by mental education.

Here then we have to explore the specific difference between the incidents and objects of to-day, as exposed to our daily observation, and the incidents and objects of time past, as bequeathed to us by history, poetry, or tradition.

In the first place, there is, no doubt, a considerable *real* difference between the things of to-day and those of times past: but as all former times, their incidents and objects differ amongst themselves, this can hardly be the cause of the specific difference sought for—a difference between our share of things past and things present. This real, but not specific difference then, however admitted, shall not be considered here.

It is obvious, in the meanwhile, that all which we have of the past is stamped with an impress of mental assimilation: an impress it has received from the mind of the author who has garnered it up, and disposed it in that form and order which ensure it acceptance with posterity. For let a writer of history be as matter of fact as he will, the very order and classification of events will save us the trouble of confusion, and render them graspable, and more capable of assimilation, than is the raw material of every-day experience. In fact the work of mind is begun, the key of intelligence is given, and we have only to continue the process. Where the vehicle for the transmission of things past is poetry, then we have them presented in that succession, and with that modification of force, a resilient plasticity, now advancing, now recoiling, insinuating and grappling, that ere this material and mental warfare is over, we find the facts thus transmitted are incorporated with our psychical

existence. And in tradition is it otherwise?—Every man tells the tale in his own way; and the merits of the story itself, or the person who tells it, or his way of telling, procures it a lodgment in the mind of the hearer, whence it is ever ready to start up and claim kindred with some external excitement.

Thus it is the luck of all things of the past to come down to us with some poetry about them; while from those of diurnal experience we must extract this poetry ourselves: and although all good men are, more or less, poets, they are passive or recipient poets; while the active or donative poet caters for them what they fail to collect. For let a poet walk through London, and he shall see a succession of incidents, suggesting some moral beauty by a contrast of times with times, unfolding some principle of nature, developing some attribute of man, or pointing to some glory in The Maker: while the man who walked behind him saw nothing but shops and pavement, and coats and faces; neither did he hear the aggregated turmoil of a city of nations, nor the noisy exponents of various desires, appetites and pursuits: each pulsing tremour of the atmosphere was not struck into it by a subtile ineffable something willed forcibly out of a cranium: neither did he see the driver of horses holding a rod of light in his eye and feeling his way, in a world he was rushing through, by the motion of the end of that rod:—he only saw the wheels in motion, and heard the rattle on the stones; and yet this man stopped twice at a book shop to buy 'a Tennyson,' or a 'Browning's Sordello.' Now this man might have seen all that the poet saw; he walked through the same streets: yet the poet goes home and writes a poem; and he who failed to feel the poetry of the things themselves detects it readily in the poet's version. Then why, it is asked, does not this man, schooled by the poet's example, look out for himself for the future, and so find attractions in things of to-day? He does so to a trifling extent, but the reason why he does so rarely will be found in the former demonstration.

It was shown how bygone objects and incidents come down to us invested in peculiar attractions: this the poet knows and feels, and the probabilities are that he transferred the incidents of to-day, with all their poetical and moral suggestions, to the romantic long-ago, partly from a feeling of prudence, and partly that he himself was under this spell of antiquity, How many a Troubadour, who recited tales of king Arthur, had his incidents furnished him by the events of his own time! And thus it is the many are attracted to the poetry of things past, yet impervious to the poetry of things present. But this retrograde movement in the poet, painter, or

sculptor (except in certain cases as will subsequently appear), if not the result of necessity, is an error in judgment or a culpable dishonesty. For why should he not acknowledge the source of his inspiration, that others may drink of the same spring with himself; and perhaps drink deeper and a clearer draught?—For the water is unebbing and exhaustless, and fills the more it is emptied: why then should it be filtered through his tank *where* he can teach men to drink it at the fountain?

If, as every poet, every painter, every sculptor will acknowledge, his best and most original ideas are derived from his own times: if his great lessonings to piety, truth, charity, love, honor, honesty, gallantry, generosity, courage, are derived from the same source; why transfer them to distant periods, and make them *not things of to-day?* Why teach us to revere the saints of old, and not our own family-worshippers? Why to admire the lance-armed knight, and not the patience-armed hero of misfortune? Why to draw a sword we do not wear to aid an oppressed damsel, and not a purse which we do wear to rescue an erring one? Why to worship a martyred St. Agatha, and not a sick woman attending the sick? Why teach us to honor an Aristides or a Regulus, and not one who pays an equitable, though to him ruinous, tax without a railing accusation? And why not teach us to help what the laws cannot help?—Why teach us to hate a Nero or an Appius, and not an underselling oppressor of workmen and betrayer of women and children? Why to love a *Ladie in bower*, and not a wife's fireside? Why paint or poetically depict the horrible race of Ogres and Giants, and not show Giant Despair dressed in that modern habit he walks the streets in? Why teach men what were great and good deeds in the old time, neglecting to show them any good for themselves?—Till these questions are answered absolutory to the artist, it were unwise to propose the other question—Why a poet, painter or sculptor is not honored and loved as formerly? "As formerly," says some avowed sceptic in *old world transcendency* and *golden age affairs*, "I believe *formerly* the artist was as much respected and cared for as he is now. 'Tis true the Greeks granted an immunity from taxation to some of their artists, who were often great men in the state, and even the companions of princes. And are not some of our poets peers? Have not some of our artists received knighthood from the hand of their Sovereign, and have not some of them received pensions?"

To answer objections of this latitude demands the assertion of certain characteristic facts which, tho' not here demonstrated, may be authenticated by reference to history. Of these, the facts of

Alfred's disguised visit to the Danish camp, and Aulaff's visit to the Saxon, are sufficient to show in what respect the poets of that period were held; when a man without any safe conduct whatever could enter the enemy's camp on the very eve of battle, as was here the case; could enter unopposed, unquestioned, and return unmolested!—What could have conferred upon the poet of that day so singular a privilege? What upon the poet of an earlier time that sanctity in behoof whereof

> "The great Emathian conqueror bid spare
> The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
> Went to the ground: and the repeated air
> Of sad Electra's poet had the power
> To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare."

What but an universal recognition of the poet as an universal benefactor of mankind? And did mankind recognize him as such, from some unaccountable infatuation, or because his labours obtained for him an indefeasible right to that estimate? How came it, when a Greek sculptor had completed some operose performance, that his countrymen bore him in triumph thro' their city, and rejoiced in his prosperity as identical with their own? How but because his art had embodied some principle of beauty whose mysterious influence it was their pride to appreciate—or he had enduringly moulded the limbs of some well-trained Athlete, such as it was their interest to develop, or he had recorded the overthrow of some barbaric invader whom their fathers had fallen to repel.

In the middle ages when a knight listened, in the morning, to some song of brave doing, ere evening he himself might be the hero of such song.—What wonder then that he held sacred the function of the poet! Now-a-days our heroes (and we have them) are left unchapleted and neglected—and therefore the poet lives and dies neglected.

Thus it would appear from these facts (which have been collaterally evolved in course of enquiring into the propriety of choosing the subject from past or present time, and in course of the consequent analysis) that Art, to become a more powerful engine of civilization, assuming a practically humanizing tendency (the admitted function of Art), should be made more directly conversant with the things, incidents, and influences which surround and constitute the living world of those whom Art proposes to improve, and, whether it should appear in event that Art can or can not assume this attitude without jeopardizing her specific existence, that such a consummation were desirable must be equally obvious in either case.

Let us return now to the former consideration. It was stated that the poet is affected by every day incidents, which would have little or no effect on the mind of a general observer: and if you ask the poet, who from his conduct may be the supposed advocate of the past as the fittest medium for poetic eduction, why he embodied the suggestions of to-day in the matter and dress of antiquity; he is likely to answer as follows.—"You have stated "that men pass by that which furnishes me with my subject: If I "merely reproduce what they slighted, the reproduction will be "slighted equally. It appears then that I must devise some means "of attracting their sympathies—and the medium of antiquity is "the fittest for three several reasons. 1st.—Nothing comes down "to us from antiquity unless fraught with sufficient interest of some "sort, to warrant it being worthy of record. Thus, all incidents "which we possess of the old time being more or less interesting, "there arises an illative impression that all things of old really "were so: and all things in idea associated with that time, "whether real or fictitious, are afforded a favorable entertainment. "Now these associations are neither trivial nor fanciful:* for I "remember to have discovered, after visiting the British Museum "for the first time, that the odour of camphor, for which I had "hitherto no predilection, afforded me a peculiar satisfaction, "seemingly suggestive of things scientific or artistic; it was in fact "a *literary smell!* All this was vague and unaccountable until "some time after when this happened again, and I was at once "reminded of an enormous walrus at the British Museum, and "then remembered how the whole collection, from end to end, was "permeated with the odour of camphor! Still, despite the *con-* "*sciousness* of this, the camphor retains its influence. Now let a "poem, a painting, or sculpture, smell ever so little of antiquity, and "every intelligent reader will be full of delightful imaginations. "2nd.—All things ancient are mysterious in obscurity:—veneration, "wonder, and curiosity are the result. 3rd.—All things ancient "are dead and gone:—we sympathize with them accordingly. All "these effects of antiquity, as a means of enforcing poetry, declare it "too powerful an ally to be readily abandoned by the poet." To all this the painter will add that the costume of almost any ancient time is more beautiful than that of the present—added to which it exposes more of that most beautiful of all objects, the human figure.

Thus we have a formidable array of objections to the choice of

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* Here the author, in the person of respondent, takes occasion to narrate a real fact.

present-day subjects: and first, it was objected and granted, that incidents of the present time are well nigh barren in poetic attraction for the many. Then it was objected, but not granted, that their poetic or pictorial counterparts will be equally unattractive also: but this last remains to be proved. It was said, and is believed by the author, (and such as doubt it he does not address) that all good men are more or less poetical in some way or other; while their poetry shows itself at various times. Thus the business-man in the street has other to think of than poetry; but when he is inclined to look at a picture, or in his more poetical humour, will he neglect the pictorial counterpart of what he neglected before? To test this, show him a camera obscura, where there is a more literal transcript of present-day nature than any painting can be:—what is the result? He expresses no anxiety to quit it, but a great curiosity to investigate; he feels it is very beautiful, indeed more beautiful than nature: and this he will say is because he does not see nature as an artist does. Now the solution of all this is easy: 1st. He is in a mood of mind which renders him accessible to the influences of poetry, which was not before the case. 2nd. He looks at that steadily which he before regarded cursorily; and, as the picture remains in his eye, it acquires an amount of harmony, in behoof of an intrinsic harmony resident in the organ itself, which exerts proportionately modifying influences on all things that enter within it; and of the nervous harmony, and the beautifully apportioned stimuli of alternating ocular spectra. 3rd. There is a resolution of discord effected by the instrument itself, inasmuch as its effects are homogeneous. All these harmonizing influences are equally true of the painting; and though we have no longer the homogeneous effect of the camera, we have the homogoneous effect of one mind, viz., the mind of the artist.

Thus having disproved the supposed poetical obstacles to the rendering of real life or nature in its own real garb and time, as faithfully as Art can render it, nothing need be said to answer the advantages of the antique or mediæval rendering; since they were only called in to neutralize the aforesaid obstacles, which obstacles have proved to be fictitious. It remains then to consider the *artistic* objection of costume, &c., which consideration ranges under the head of *real differences between the things of past and present times*, a consideration formerly postponed. But this requiring a patient analysis, will necessitate a further postponement, and in conclusion, there will be briefly stated the elements of the argument, thus.—It must be obvious to every physicist that physical beauty (which this subject involves on the one side [the ancient] as opposed to the

want of it on the other [the modern]) was in ancient times as superior to physical beauty in the modern, as psychical beauty in the modern is superior to psychical beauty in the ancient. Costume then, as physical, is more beautiful ancient than modern. Now that a certain amount of physical beauty is requisite to constitute Fine Art, will be readily admitted; but what that amount is, must be ever undefined. That the maximum of physical beauty does not constitute the maximum of Fine Art, is apparent from the facts of the physical beauty of *Early Christian* Art being inferior to that of Grecian art; whilst, in the concrete, Early Christian Art is superior to Grecian. Indeed some specimens of Early Christian Art are repulsive rather than beautiful, yet these are in many cases the highest works of Art.

In the "Plague at Ashdod," great physical beauty, resulting from picturesque costume and the exposed human figure, was so far from desirable, that it seems purposely deformed by blotches of livid color; yet the whole is a most noble work of Poussin. Containing as much physical beauty as this picture, the writer remembers to have seen an incident in the streets where a black-haired, sordid, wicked-headed man, was striking the butt of his whip at the neck of a horse, to urge him round an angle of the pavement; a smocked countryman offered him the loan of his mules: a blacksmith standing by, showed him how to free the wheel, by only swerving the animal to the left: he, taking no notice whatever, went on striking and striking; whilst a woman waiting to cross, with a child in her one hand, and with the other pushing its little head close to her side, looked with wide eyes at this monster.

This familiar incident, affording a subject fraught with more moral interest than, and as much picturesque matter as, many antique or mediæval subjects, is only wanting in that romantic attraction which, by association, attaches to things of the past. Yet, let these modern subjects once excite interest, as it really appears they can, and the incidents of to-day will acquire romantic attractions by the same association of ideas.

The claims of ancient, mediæval, and modern subjects will be considered in detail at a future period.

The Carillon.

(Antwerp and Bruges.)

*** In these and others of the Flemish Towns, the *Carillon*, or chimes which have a most fantastic and delicate music, are played almost continually The custom is very ancient.

At Antwerp, there is a low wall
Binding the city, and a moat
Beneath, that the wind keeps afloat.
You pass the gates in a slow drawl
Of wheels. If it is warm at all
The Carillon will give you thought.

I climbed the stair in Antwerp church,
What time the urgent weight of sound
At sunset seems to heave it round.
Far up, the Carillon did search
The wind ; and the birds came to perch
Far under, where the gables wound.

In Antwerp harbour on the Scheldt
I stood along, a certain space
Of night. The mist was near my face :
Deep on, the flow was heard and felt.
The Carillon kept pause, and dwelt
In music through the silent place.

At Bruges, when you leave the train,
—A singing numbness in your ears,—
The Carillon's first sound appears
Only the inner moil. Again
A little minute though—your brain
Takes quiet, and the whole sense hears.

John Memmeling and John Van Eyck
Hold state at Bruges. In sore shame
I scanned the works that keep their name.
The Carillon, which then did strike
Mine ears, was heard of theirs alike :
It set me closer unto them.

I climbed at Bruges all the flight
The Belfry has of ancient stone.
For leagues I saw the east wind blown :
The earth was grey, the sky was white.
I stood so near upon the height
That my flesh felt the Carillon.

October, 1849.

Emblems.

I lay through one long afternoon,
Vacantly plucking the grass.
I lay on my back, with steadfast gaze
Watching the cloud-shapes pass;
Until the evening's chilly damps
Rose from the hollows below,
Where the cold marsh-reeds grow.

I saw the sun sink down behind
The high point of a mountain;
Its last light lingered on the weeds
That choked a shattered fountain,
Where lay a rotting bird, whose plumes
Had beat the air in soaring.
On these things I was poring:—

The sun seemed like my sense of life,
Now weak, that was so strong;
The fountain—that continual pulse
Which throbbed with human song:
The bird lay dead as that wild hope
Which nerved my thoughts when young.
These symbols had a tongue,

And told the dreary lengths of years
I must drag my weight with me;
Or be like a mastless ship stuck fast
On a deep, stagnant sea.
A man on a dangerous height alone,
If suddenly struck blind,
Will never his home path find.

When divers plunge for ocean's pearls,
And chance to strike a rock,
Who plunged with greatest force below
Receives the heaviest shock.
With nostrils wide and breath drawn in,
I rushed resolved on the race;
Then, stumbling, fell in the chase.

Yet with time's cycles forests swell
Where stretched a desert plain:
Time's cycles make the mountains rise
Where heaved the restless main:
On swamps where moped the lonely stork,
In the silent lapse of time
Stands a city in its prime.

I thought: then saw the broadening shade
Grow slowly over the mound,
That reached with one long level slope
Down to a rich vineyard ground:
The air about lay still and hushed,
As if in serious thought:
But I scarcely heeded aught,

Till I heard, hard by, a thrush break forth,
Shouting with his whole voice,
So that he made the distant air
And the things around rejoice.
My soul gushed, for the sound awoke
Memories of early joy:
I sobbed like a chidden boy.

Sonnet.

Early Aspirations.

How many a throb of the young poet-heart,
Aspiring to the ideal bliss of Fame,
Deems that Time soon may sanctify his claim
Among the sons of song to dwell apart.—
Time passes—passes! The aspiring flame
Of Hope shrinks down; the white flower Poesy
Breaks on its stalk, and from its earth-turned eye
Drop sleepy tears instead of that sweet dew
Rich with inspiring odours, insect wings
Drew from its leaves with every changing sky,
While its young innocent petals unsunn'd grew.
No more in pride to other ears he sings,
But with a dying charm himself unto:—
For a sad season: then, to active life he springs.

From the Cliffs: Noon.

The sea is in its listless chime:
  Time's lapse it is, made audible,—
  The murmur of the earth's large shell.
In a sad blueness beyond rhyme
  It ends: sense, without thought, can pass
  No stadium further. Since time was,
This sound hath told the lapse of time.

No stagnance that death wins,—it hath
  The mournfulness of ancient life,
  Always enduring at dull strife.
As the world's heart of rest and wrath,
  Its painful pulse is in the sands.
  Last utterly, the whole sky stands,
Grey and not known, along its path.

Fancies at Leisure.

I. In Spring.

The sky is blue here, scarcely with a stain
Of grey for clouds: here the young grasses gain
A larger growth of green over this splinter
Fallen from the ruin. Spring seems to have told Winter
He shall not freeze again here. Tho' their loss
Of leaves is not yet quite repaired, trees toss
Sprouts from their boughs. The ash you called so stiff
Curves, daily, broader shadow down the cliff.

II. In Summer.

How the rooks caw, and their beaks seem to clank!
  Let us just move out there,—(it might be cool
Under those trees,) and watch how the thick tank
  By the old mill is black,—a stagnant pool
Of rot and insects. There goes by a lank
  Dead hairy dog floating. Will Nature's rule
Of life return hither no more? The plank
  Rots in the crushed weeds, and the sun is cruel.

III. The Breadth of Noon.

Long time I lay there, while a breeze would blow
From the south softly, and, hard by, a slender
Poplar swayed to and fro to it. Surrender
Was made of all myself to quiet. No
Least thought was in my mind of the least woe:
Yet the void silence slowly seemed to render
My calmness not less calm, but yet more tender,
And I was nigh to weeping.—'Ere I go,'
I thought, 'I must make all this stillness mine;
The sky's blue almost purple, and these three
Hills carved against it, and the pine on pine
The wood in their shade has. All this I see
So inwardly I fancy it may be
Seen thus of parted souls by *their* sunshine.'

IV. Sea-Freshness.

Look at that crab there. See if you can't haul
His backward progress to this spar of a ship
Thrown up and sunk into the sand here. Clip
His clipping feelers hard, and give him all
Your hand to gripe at: he'll take care not fall:
So,—but with heed, for you are like to slip
In stepping on the plank's sea-slime. Your lip—
No wonder—curves in mirth at the slow drawl
Of the squat creature's legs. We've quite a shine
Of waves round us, and here there comes a wind
So fresh it must bode us good luck. How long
Boatman, for one and sixpence? Line by line
The sea comes toward us sun-ridged. Oh! we sinned
Taking the crab out: let's redress his wrong.

V. The Fire Smouldering.

I look into the burning coals, and see
Faces and forms of things; but they soon pass,
Melting one into other: the firm mass
Crumbles, and breaks, and fades gradually,
Shape into shape as in a dream may be,
Into an image other than it was:
And so on till the whole falls in, and has
Not any likeness,—face, and hand, and tree,

All gone. So with the mind: thought follows thought,
This hastening, and that pressing upon this,
A mighty crowd within so narrow room:
And then at length heavy-eyed slumbers come,
The drowsy fancies grope about, and miss
Their way, and what was so alive is nought.

Papers of "The M. S. Society." *

No. I.

An Incident in the Siege of Troy, seen from a modern Observatory.

Sixteen Specials in Priam's Keep
Sat down to their mahogany:
The League, just then, had made *busters* cheap,
And Hesiod writ his "Theogony,"
A work written to prove "that, if men would be men,
And demand their rights again and again,
They might live like gods, have infinite *smokes*,
Drink infinite rum, drive infinite *mokes*,
Which would come from every part of the known
And civilized globe, twice as good as their own,
And, finally, Ilion, the work-shop should be
Of the world—one vast manufactory!"

From arrow-slits, port-holes, windows, what not,
Their sixteen quarrels the Specials had shot
From sixteen arblasts, their daily task;
Why they'd to do it they didn't ask,
For, after they'd done it, they sat down to dinner;
The sixteen Specials they didn't get thinner;
But kept quite loyal, and every day
Asked no questions but fired away.

Would you like me to tell you the reason why
These sixteen Specials kept letting fly
From eleven till one, as the Chronicle speaks?
They did it, my boys, to annoy the Greeks,
Who kept up a perpetual cannonade
On the walls, and threaten'd an escalade.

* The Editor is requested to state that "M. S." does not here mean Manuscript.

The sixteen Specials were so arranged
That the shots they shot were not shots exchanged,
But every shot so told on the foe
  The Greeks were obliged to draw it mild:
Diomedes—"a fix," Ulysses—"no go"
  Declared it, the "king of men" cried like a child;
Whilst the Specials, no more than a fine black Tom
I keep to serenade Mary from
The tiles, where he lounges every night,
Knew nor cared what they did, and were perfectly right.

But the fact was thus: one Helenus,
A man much faster than any of us,
More fast than a gent at the top of a "bus,"
More fast than the coming of "Per col. sus."
Which Shakespeare says comes galloping,
(I take his word for anything)
This Helenus had a cure of souls—
  He had cured the souls of several Greeks,
Achilles sole or heel,—the rolls
  Of fame (not French) say Paris:—speaks
  Anatomist Quain thereof. Who seeks
May read the story from z to a;
He has handled and argued it every way;—
A subject on which there's a good deal to say.
His work was ever the best, and still is,
Because of this note on the Tendo Achillis.

This Helenus was a man well bred,
  He was *up* in Electricity,
  Fortification, Theology,
  Æsthetics and Pugilicity;
Celsus and Gregory he'd read;
  Knew every "dodge" of *glove and fist;*
Was a capital curate, (I think I've said)
  And Transcendental Anatomist:
Well up in Materia Medica,
  Right up in Toxicology,
And Medical Jurisprudence, that sell!
  And the *dead sell* Physiology:
Knew what and how much of any potation
Would get him through any examination:
With credit not small, had passed the Hall
And the College—and they couldn't *pluck* him at all.

He'd written on Rail-roads, delivered a lecture
Upon the Electric Telegraph,
Had played at single-stick with Hector,
And written a paper on half-and-half.

With these and other works of note
He was not at all a "*people's man*,"
Though public, for the works he wrote
Were not that sort the people can
Admire or read; they were Mathematic
The most part, some were Hydrostatic;
But Algebraic, in the main,
All full of a, b, c, and n—
And other letters which perplex—
The last was full of double x!
In fact, such stuff as one may easily
Imagine didn't go down greasily,
Nor calculated to produce
Such heat as "cooks the public goose,"
And does it of so brown a hue
Men wonder while they relish too.

It therefore was that much alone
He studied; and a room is shown
In a coffee-house, an upper room,
Where none but hungry devils come,
Wherein 'tis said, with animation
He read "Vestiges of Creation."

Accordingly, a month about
After he'd *chalked up* steak and stout
For the last time, he gave the world
A pamphlet, wherein he unfurled
A tissue of facts which, soon as blown,
Ran like wildfire through the town.
And, first of all, he plainly showed
A capital error in the mode
Of national defences, thus—
"The Greek one thousand miles from us,"
Said he, (for nine hundred and ninety-nine
The citadel stood above the brine
In perpendicular height, allowing
For slope of glacis, thereby showing
An increase of a mile,) "'tis plain
The force that shot and shell would gain,

By gravitation, with their own,
Would fire the ground by friction alone;
Which, being once in fusion schooled
Ere cool, as *Fire-mist had cooled*"
Would gain a motion, which must soon,
Just as the earth detached the moon
And gave her locomotive birth,
Detach some twenty miles of earth,
And send it swinging in the air,
The Devil only could tell where!
Then came the probability
With what increased facility
The Greeks, by this projectile power,
Might land on Ilion's highest tower,
All safe and sound, in battle array,
With howitzers prepared to play,
And muskets to the muzzles rammed;—
Why, the town would be utterly smashed and jammed,
And positively, as the phrase is
Vernacular, be "sent to blazes"!

In the second place, he then would ask,
(And here he took several members to task,
And wondered—"he really must presume
To wonder" a statesman like—you know whom—
Who ever evinced the deepest sense
Of a crying sin in any expense,
Should so besotted be, and lost
To the fact that now, at public cost,
Powder was being day by day
Wantonly wasted, blown away);—
Yes, he would ask, "with what intent
But to perch the Greeks on a battlement
From which they might o'erlook the town,
The easier to batter it down,
Which he had proved must be the case
(If it hadn't already taken place):
He called on his readers to fear and dread it,
Whilst he wrote it,—whilst they read it!"
"How simple! How beautifully simple," said he,
"And obvious was the remedy!
Look back a century or so—
And there was the ancient Norman bow,

A weapon (he gave them leave to laugh)
Efficient, better, cheaper by half:
(He knew quite well the age abused it
Because, forsooth, the Normans used it)
These, planted in the citadel,
Would reach the walls say,—very well;
There, having spent their utmost force,
They'd drop down right, as a matter of course,
A thousand miles! Think—a thousand miles!
What was the weight for driving piles
To this? He calculated it—
'Twould equal, when both Houses sit,
The weight of the entire building,
Including Members, paint, and gilding;
But, if a speech or the address
From the throne were given, something less,
Because, as certain snores aver,
The House is then much heavier.

Now this, though very much a rub like
For Ministers, convinced the public;
And Priam, who liked to hear its brays
To any tune but "the Marseillaise,"
Summoned a Privy Council, where
'Twas shortly settled to confer
On Helenus a sole command
Of Specials.—He headed that daring band!

And sixteen Specials in Priam's keep
Got up from their mahogany;
They smoked their pipes in silence deep
Till there was such a fog—any
Attempt to discover the priest in the smother
Had bothered old Airy and Adams and t'other
And—every son of an *English* mother.

June, 1848.

No. III.

Swift's Dunces.

"When a true genius appears in the world, you may know him by this sign, that the DUNCES are all in confederacy against him."—*Swift.*

How shall we know the dunces from the man of genius, who is no doubt our superior in judgment, yet knows himself for a fool—by the proverb?

At least, my dear Doctor, you will let me, with the mass of readers, have clearer wits than the dunces—then why should I not know what you are as soon as, or sooner than Bavius, &c.—unless a dunce has a good nose, or a natural instinct for detecting wit.

Now I take it that these people stigmatized as dunces are but men of ill-balanced mental faculties, yet perhaps, in a great degree, superior to the average of minds. For instance, a poet of much merit, but more ambition, has written the "Lampiad," an epic; when he should not have dared beyond the Doric reed: his ambitious pride has prevented the publication of excellent pastorals, therefore the world only knows him for his failure. This, I say, is a likely man to become a detractor; for his good judgment shows the imperfections of most works, his own included; his ambition (an ill-combination of self-conscious worth and spleen) leads him to compare works of the highest repute; the works of contemporaries; and his own. In all cases where success is most difficult, he will be most severe; this naturally leads him to criticise the very best works.

He has himself failed; he sees errors in successful writers; he knows he possesses certain merits, and knows what the perfection of them should be. This is the ground work of envy, which makes a man of parts a comparative fool, and a confederate against "true genius."

No. III.

Mental Scales.

I make out my case thus—

There is an exact balance in the distribution of causes of pleasure and pain: this has been satisfactorily proved in my next paper, upon "Cause and Effect," therefore I shall take it for granted. What, then, is there but the mind to determine its own state of happiness, or misery: just as the motion of the scales depends upon themselves, when two equal weights are put into them. The balance ought to be truly hung; but if the unpleasant scale is heavier, then the motion is in favor of the pleasant scale, and vice versa. Whether the beam stands horizontally, or otherwise, does not matter (that only determines the key): draw a line at right angles to it, then put in your equal weights; if the angle becomes larger on the unpleasant scale's side of the line, happiness is the result, if on the other, misery.

It requires but a slight acquaintance with mechanics to see that he who would be happy should have the unpleasant side heavier. I hate corollaries or we might have a group of them equally applicable to Art and Models.

June, 1848.

Reviews.

Some Account of the Life and Adventures of Sir Reginald Mohun, Bart. Done in Verse by George John Cayley. Canto 1st. Pickering. 1849.

Inconsistency, whether in matters of importance or in trifles, whether in substance or in detail, is never pleasant. We do not here impute to this poem any inconsistency between one portion and another; but certainly its form is at variance with its subject and treatment. In the wording of the title, and the character of typography, there is a studious archaism: more modern the poem itself could scarcely be.

"Sir Reginald Mohun" aims, to judge from the present sample, at depicting the easy intercourse of high life; and the author enters on his theme with a due amount of sympathy. It is in this respect, if in any, that the mediæval tone of the work lasts beyond the title page. In Mr. Cayley's eyes, the proof of the comparative prosperity of England is that

> "Still Queen Victoria sits upon her throne;
> Our aristocracy still keep alive,
> And, on the whole, may still be said to thrive,—
> Tho' now and then with ducal acres groan
> The honored tables of the auctioneer.
> Nathless, our aristocracy is dear,
> Tho' their estates go cheap; and all must own
> That they still give society its tone."—p. 16.

He proceeds in these terms:

> "Our baronets of late appear to be
> Unjustly snubbed and talked and written down;
> Partly from follies of Sir Something Brown,
> Stickling for badges due to their degree,
> And partly that their honor's late editions
> Have been much swelled with surgeons and physicians;
> For 'honor hath small skill in surgery,'
> And skill in surgery small honor."—p. 17.

What "honor" is here meant? and against whom is the taunt implied?—against the "surgeons and physicians," or against the depreciation of them. Surely the former can hardly have been intended. The sentence will bear to be cleared of some ambiguity, or else to be cleared off altogether.

Our introduction to Sir Reginald Mohun, Lord of Nornyth Place, and of "an income clear of 20,000 pounds," and to his friends Raymond St. Oun, De Lacy, Wilton, Tancarville, and Vivian,—(for the author's names are aristocratic, like his predilections)—is effected through the medium of a stanza, new, we believe, in arrangement, though differing but slightly from the established octave, and of verses so easy and flowing as to make us wonder less at the promise of

"provision plenty
For cantos twelve, or, may be, four and twenty,"

than at Mr. Cayley's assertion that he

"Can never get along at all in prose."

The incidents, as might be expected of a first canto, are neither many nor important, and will admit of compression into a very small compass.

Sir Reginald, whose five friends had arrived at Nornyth Place late on the preceding night, is going over the grounds with them in a shooting party after a late breakfast. St. Oun expresses a wish to "prowl about the place" in preference, not feeling in the mood for the required exertion.

"'Of lazy dogs the laziest ever fate
Set on two useless legs you surely are,
And born beneath some wayward sauntering star
To sit for ever swinging on a gate,
And laugh at wiser people passing through.'
So spake the bard De Lacy: for they two
In frequent skirmishes of fierce debate
Would bicker, tho' their mutual love was great."—p. 35.

Mohun, however, sides with St. Oun, and agrees to escort him in his rambles after the first few shots. He accordingly soon resigns his gun to the keeper Oswald, whose position as one who

"came into possession
Of the head-keepership by due succession
Thro' sire and grandsire, who, when one was dead,
Left his right heir-male keeper in his stead,"

Mr. Cayley evidently regards with some complacence. The friends enter a boat: here, while sailing along a rivulet that winds through the estate, St. Oun falls to talking of wealth, its value and insufficiency, of death, and life, and fame; and coming at length to ask after the history of Sir Reginald's past life, he suggests "this true epic opening for relation:"

"'*The sun, from his meridian heights declining*
Mirrored his richest tints upon the shining
Bosom of a lake. In a light shallop, two
Young men, whose dress, etcætera, *proclaims,*
Etcætera,—so would write G. P. R. James—
Glided in silence o'er the waters blue,
Skirting the wooded slopes. Upward they gazed
On Nornyth's ancient pile, whose windows blazed

"'*In sunset rays, whose crimson fulgence streamed*
Across the flood: wrapped in deep thought they seemed.
'You are pensive, Reginald,' at length thus spake
The helmsman: 'ha! it is the mystic power
Fraught by the sacred stillness of the hour:
Forgive me if your reverie I break,
Craving, with friendship's sympathy, to share
Your spirit's burden, be it joy or care.'"—pp. 48, 49.

Sir Reginald Mohun's story is soon told.—Born in Italy, and losing his mother at the moment of his birth, and his father and only sister dying also soon after, he is left alone in the world.

"'My father was a melancholy man,
Having a touch of genius, and a heart,
But not much of that worldly better part
Called force of character, which finds some plan
For getting over anguish that will crush
Weak hearts of stronger feeling. He began
To pine; was pale; and had a hectic flush
At times; and from his eyelids tears would gush.

"'Some law of hearts afflicted seems to bind
A spell by which the scenes of grief grow dear;
He never could leave Italy, tho' here
And there he wandered with unquiet mind,—
Rome, Florence, Mantua, Milan; once as far
As Venice; but still Naples had a blind
Attraction which still drew him thither. There
He died. Heaven rest his ashes from their care.

"'He wrote, a month or so before he died,
To Wilton's father; (he is Earl of Eure,
My mother's brother); saying he was sure
That he should soon be gone, and would confide
Us to his guardian care. My uncle came
Before his death. We stood by his bedside.
He blessed us. We, who scarcely knew the name
Of death, yet read in the expiring flame

"'Of his sunk eyes some awful mystery,
And wept we knew not why. There was a grace
Of radiant joyful hope upon his face,
Most unaccustomed, and which seemed to be
All foreign to his wasted frame; and yet
So heavenly in its consolation we
Smiled through the tears with which our lids were wet.
His lips were cold, as, whispering, 'Do not fret

"'When I am gone,' he kissed us: and he took
Our uncle's hands, which on our heads he laid,
And said: 'My children, do not be afraid
Of Death, but be prepared to meet him. Look;
Here is your mother's brother; he to her
As Reginald to Eve.' His thin voice shook.—
'Eve was your Mother's name.' His words did err,
As dreaming; and his wan lips ceased to stir.'"—pp. 55-57.

(We have quoted this passage, not insensible to its defects,—some common-place in sentiment and diction; but independently of the good it does really contain, as being the only one of such a character sustained in quality to a moderate length.)

Reginald and his cousin Wilton grew up together friends, though not bound by common sympathies. The latter has known life early, and "earned experience piecemeal:" with the former, thought has already become a custom.

Thus far only does Reginald bring his retrospect; his other friends come up, and they all return homeward. Here, too, ends the story of this canto; but not without warranting some surmise of what will furnish out the next. There is evidence of observation adroitly applied in the talk of the two under-keepers who take charge of the boat.

"They said: 'Oh! what a gentleman to talk
Is that there Lacy! What a tongue he've got!
But Mr. Vivian *is* a pretty shot.
And what a pace his lordship wish to walk!
Which Mr. Tancarville, he seemed quite beat:
But he's a pleasant gentleman. Good lawk!
How he do make me laugh! Dang! this 'ere seat
Have wet my smalls slap thro'. Dang! what a treat!

" 'There's company coming to the Place to morn:
Bess housemaid told me. Lord and Lady ——: dash
My wigs! I can't think on. But there's a mash
O' comp'ny and fine ladies; fit to torn
The heads of these young chaps. Why now I'd lay
This here gun to an empty powder-horn
Sir Reginald be in love, or that-a-way.
He looks a little downcast-loikish,—eh?' "—pp. 62, 63.

It will be observed that there is no vulgarity in this vulgarism: indeed, the gentlemanly good humour of the poem is uninterrupted. This, combined with neatness of handling, and the habit of not overdoing, produces that general facility of appearance which it is no disparagement, in speaking of a first canto, to term the chief result of so much of these life and adventures as is here "done into verse." It may be fairly anticipated, however, that no want of variety in the conception, or of success in the pourtrayal, of character will need to be complained of: meanwhile, a few passages may be quoted to confirm our assertions. The two first extracts are examples of mere cleverness; and all that is aimed at is attained. The former follows out a previous comparison of the world with a "huge churn."

"Yet some, despising life's legitimate aim,
Instead of butter, would become "the cheese;"
A low term for distinction. Whence the name
I know not: gents invented it; and these
Gave not an etymology. I see no
Likelier than this, which with their taste agrees;
The *caseine* element I conceive to mean no
Less than the *beau ideal* of the Casino."—p. 12.

"Wise were the Augurers of old, nor erred
In substance, deeming that the life of man—
(This is a new reflection, spick and span)—
May be much influenced by the flight of birds.
Our senate can no longer hold their house
When culminates the evil star of grouse;
And stoutest patriots will their shot-belts gird
When first o'er stubble-field hath partridge whirred."—p. 25.

In these others there is more purpose, with a no less definite conciseness:

"Comes forth the first great poet. Then a number
Of followers leave much literary lumber.

He cuts his phrases in the sapling grain
Of language; and so weaves them at his will.
They from his wickerwork extract with pain
The wands now warped and stiffened, which but ill
Bend to their second-hand employment."—pp. 4, 5.

"What's life? A riddle;
Or sieve which sifts you thro' it in the middle."—p. 45.

The misadventures of the five friends on their road to Nornyth are very sufficiently described:

"The night was cold and cloudy as they topped
A moorland slope, and met the bitter blast,
So cutting that their ears it almost cropped;
And rain began to fall extremely fast.
A broken sign-post left them in great doubt
About two roads; and, when an hour was passed,
They learned their error from a lucid lout;
Soon after, one by one, their lamps went out."—p. 29.

There remains to point out one fault,—and that the last fault the occurrence of which could be looked for, after so clearly expressed an intention as this:

"But, if an Author takes to writing fine,
(Which means, I think, an artificial tone),
The public sicken and won't read a line.
I hope there's nothing of this sort in mine."—p. 6.

A quotation or two will fully explain our meaning: and we would seriously ask Mr. Cayley to reflect whether he has always borne his principle in mind, and avoided "writing fine;" whether he has not sometimes fallen into high-flown common-place of the most undisguised stamp, rendered, moreover, doubly inexcusable and out of place by being put into the mouth of one of the personages of the poem; It is Sir Reginald Mohun that speaks; and truly, though not thrust forward as a "wondrous paragon of praise," he must be confessed to be,

"Judging by specimens the author quotes,
An utterer of most ordinary phrases,"

not words only and sentences, but real *phrases*, in the more distinct and specific sense of the term.

" 'There, while yet a new born thing,
Death o'er my cradle waved his darksome wing;
My mother died to give me birth: forlorn
I came into the world, a babe of woe,
Ill-omened from my childhood's early morn;
Yet heir to what the idolaters of show
Deem life's good things, which earthly bliss bestow.

" 'The riches of the heart they call a dream;
Love, hope, faith, friendship, hollow phantasies:
Living but for their pockets and their eyes,
They stifle in their breasts the purer beam
Of sunshine glanced from heaven upon their clay,
To be its light and warmth. This is a theme
For homilies: and I will only say,
The heart feeds not on fortune's baubles gay.' "—p. 51.

Sir Reginald's narrative concludes after this fashion:

" 'But what is this? A dubious compromise;
Twilight of cloudy zones, whereon the blaze
Of sunshine breaks but seldom with its rays
Of heavenly hope, towards which the spirit sighs
Its aspirations, and is lost again
'Mid doubts: to grasp the wisdom of the skies
Too feeble, tho' convinced earth's bonds are vain,
Cowering faint-hearted in the festering chain.' "—p. 60.

A similar instance of conventionality constantly repeated is the sin of inversion, which is no less prevalent, throughout the poem, in the conversational than in the narrative portions. In some cases the exigencies of rhyme may be pleaded in palliation, as for "Cam's marge along" and "breezy willows cool," which occur in two consecutive lines of a speech; but there are many for which no such excuse can be urged. Does any one talk of "sloth obscure," or of "hearts afflicted?" Or what reason is there for preferring "verses easy" to *easy verses?* Ought not the principle laid down in the following passage of the introduction to be followed out, not only into the intention, but into the manner and quality also, of the whole work?

" 'I mean to be *sincere* in this my lay:
That which I think I shall write down without
A drop of pain or varnish. Therefore, pray,
Whatever I may chance to rhyme about,
Read it without the shadow of a doubt.' "—p. 12.

Again, the Author appears to us to have acted unwisely in occasionally departing from the usual construction of his stanzas, as in this instance:

> "'But, as I said, you know my history;
> And your's—not that you made a mystery
> Of it, nor used reserve, yet, being not
> By nature an Autophonophilete,
> (A word De Lacy fashioned and called me it)—
> Your's you have never told me yet. And what
> Can be a more appropriate occasion
> Than this true epic opening for relation?'"—p. 48.

Here the lines do not cohere so happily as in the more varied distribution of the rhymes; and, moreover, as a question of principle, we think it not advisable to allow of minor deviations from the uniformity of a prescribed metre.

It may be well to take leave of Mr. Cayley with a last quotation of his own words,—words which no critic ought to disregard:

> "I shall be deeply grateful to reviews,
> Whether they deign approval, or rebuke,
> For any hints they think may disabuse
> Delusions of my inexperienced muse."—p. 8.

If our remarks have been such as to justify the Author's wish for sincere criticism, our object is attained; and we look forward for the second canto with confidence in his powers.

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ERRATA.

Page 19, line 3, for *his*, read *its*.

Page 19, line 10, for *comes*, read *falls*.

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The Germ.

This Periodical will consist of original Poems, Stories to develope thought and principle, Essays concerning Art and other subjects, and analytic Reviews of current Literature—particularly of Poetry. Each number will also contain an Etching; the subject to be taken from the opening article of the month.

An attempt will be made, both intrinsically and by review, to claim for Poetry that place to which its present development in the literature of this country so emphatically entitles it.

The endeavour held in view throughout the writings on Art will be to encourage and enforce an entire adherence to the simplicity of nature; and also to direct attention, as an auxiliary medium, to the comparatively few works which Art has yet produced in this spirit. It need scarcely be added that the chief object of the etched designs will be to illustrate this aim practically, as far as the method of execution will permit; in which purpose they will be produced with the utmost care and completeness.